

Devotional and Selections

LIVING AT OUR BEST.

Do not try to do a great thing; you may waste all your life looking for the opportunity which will never come. But since the little things are always claiming your attention, do them as they come, from a great motive, for the glory of God, to win his smile of approval, and to do good to men.

It is harder to plod on in obscurity, acting thus, than to stand on the high places of the field, within the view of all, and to do deeds of valor at which rival armies stand still to gaze. But no such act goes without the swift recognition and the ultimate recompense of Christ. To fulfill faithfully the duties of your station; to use to the uttermost the gifts of your ministry; to bear chafing annoyances and trivial irritations as martyrs bore the pillory and the stake; to find the one noble trait in people who try to molest you; to put the kindest construction on unkind acts and words; to love, with the love of God, even the unthankful and evil; to be content to be a fountain in the midst of a wild valley of stones, nourishing a few lichens and flowers, or now and again a thirsty sheep; and do this always, and not for the praise of man, but for the love of Jesus—this makes a great life.—F. B. Meyer.

IRREVERENT PRAYING.

My brother, take heed to that for which thou prayest! There lies the difference between the pious and the impious mind. It is not thy praying that makes thee good—not even thy sincerity in prayer. It is not thy sense of want that makes thee good—not even though expressed in abjectness. It is not thy feeling of dependence that makes thee good—not even thy feeling of dependence on Christ. It is the thing for which thou prayest, the thing for which thou hungerest, the thing for which thou dependest. Every man cries for his grapes of Eshcol; the difference is not in the cry, but in the grapes. It is possible for thee to ask from thy God three manner of things: Thou mayest ask thy neighbor's vineyard; that is bad. Thou mayest ask thine own riches; that is neither bad nor good; it is secular. Or thou mayest ask to be made unselfish; that is holy. It is not thy prayer that thy Father prizes; it is the direction of thy prayer. Dost thou deem thy child a hero because he asks thee for a holiday? Nay, though he sought it sorrowing and with tears. But if he asks thee to let him share his joy with a brother or sister, then thou art exceeding glad; then thou sayest: "Thou art my son; this day have I begotten thee!" So with thy Father. He waits till thou cryest for a crown—till thou prayest for his presence, longest for his light, sighest for his song, hungerest for his home, faintest for his footfall, callest for his company, tarriest for his tread, seekest for the sign of his coming. That will be thy Father's highest joy.—Rev. George Matheson.

THE PHILOSOPHY OF YIELDING.

He who cannot yield a point is a constant menace to the harmony of his circle of associates. He is as nearly a perpetual bore as the chances for a difference of opinion are constant. Such a man in his sober moments must be a burden to himself, provided he has any sober moments. Any one who realizes the fact that he is in a system and, who, at the same time, has any regard for that system, must understand the necessity for giving up a point occasionally. He who will not yield declares that no one else has any rights which he is bound to respect, but that he himself has many rights, and many other things which he classes along with personal rights, which he is determined to make every one else respect.

Yielding may be an evidence of weakness or of strength. To have no personal opinion, to maintain no position on any question, to agree with everything any one says simply because some one does say it, are so many proofs of an unstable character. There is no poise, no equilibrium; this is weakness. The yielding which implies strength is the ability to manage oneself. There is a spirit which protests against forsaking a position that has been assumed, even though it is ascertained that the stand is wrong. To be able to yield means, first, the mastery of self.

Yielding, then, in its nobler form, is but the other side of rulership. He who cannot rule cannot yield in this better sense. To show due deference to others, to acknowledge one's error, to entreat forgiveness for sin, all are subsequent to the firm grasp upon one's own nature, and compelling it, as it were, to obey the dictum of right and duty. Such yielding is commendable, because it implies a self-government worthy of approval.—Religious Telescope.

LO, IT IS NIGH THEE!

The surprise of life always comes in finding how we have missed the things that have lain nearest us; how we have gone far away to seek that which was close by our side all the time. Men who live best and longest are apt to come, as the result of all their living, to the conviction that life is not only richer, but simpler, than it seemed to them at first. Men go to vast labor seeking after peace and happiness. It seems to them as if it were far away from them, as if they must go through vast and strange regions to get it. They must pile up wealth, they must see every possible danger of mishap guarded against, before they can have peace.

Upon how many old men has it come with a strange surprise that peace will come to rich and poor only with contentment, and that they might as well have been content at the very beginning as at the very end of life! They have made a long journey for their treasure, and when at last they stoop to pick it up, lo, it is shining close beside the footprint which they left when they set out to travel in a circle!—Phillips Brooks.